

VZCZCXRO4753  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHKB #0803 1521333  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 011333Z JUN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BAKU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0471  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000803

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/01/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [IR](#) [AJ](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKS, OPPOSITION PARTIES ON AZERI-IRANIAN  
DEMONSTRATIONS IN IRAN

REF: BAKU 758

Classified By: Charge d, Affaires Jason P. Hyland, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Emboff met with Turkish DCM Erhan Ozoral on May 31 to discuss the Azeri-Iranian demonstrations in Iran. Ambassador Morali was Turkey's Ambassador to Iran before coming to Azerbaijan, and Turkey has consulates in Tabriz and Urmiya. Morali had told Charge May 26 that the Turkish consulates in Iran had largely confirmed the news reports of demonstrations and that the Iranians would not be able to control these protests if they continued, since Azeri-Iranians are not a small minority but "almost a majority." Ozoral, after briefly discussing the history of Turkish-speaking populations in Iran, said that Turkish diplomats in Iran now report that the demonstrations are petering out. The large demonstration planned for May 28 in Tehran (reftel) apparently was smaller than expected. Ozoral said that Turkey's posts in Iran report that the Iranian Government is basically in control of the situation and that the regime is not in danger.

¶2. (C) Ozoral pointed out that the Azeri-Iranian community suffers severe discrimination in terms of cultural rights, vice other minority communities in Iran, but that simultaneously most of the Azeri-Iranian community is "integrated" with Iran. Many Azeri-Iranians hold high-ranking positions in the Iranian Government, and in an ironic twist, the author of the cartoon that sparked the demonstrations is reportedly an Azeri-Iranian. For this reason, these particular demonstrations, Ozoral noted, have been interesting because of their "nationalistic character." He believes that the Iranian regime could defuse a lot of the problem by granting concessions in the cultural and educational area, but agrees this will be difficult to do without looking weak in the aftermath of the demonstrations.

¶3. (C) Meanwhile, members of Azerbaijan's opposition parties have, in private meetings, urged the United States to support the Azeri-Iranian community. In a meeting with visiting Senate staffer Tomicah Tillemann, Liberal Party official Avaz Temirhan said the U.S. should support the idea of a "state based in law" in Iran and support the Azeri-Iranians as possible allies - "don't miss this chance," he said cryptically. Isa Gambar of the Musavat Party agreed that the international community should support Azeri-Iranians, and that Iran's treatment of this community should be seen in the general context of the threat presented to the region and to the world by the Iranian regime. Iran routinely violates Azerbaijan's airspace, Gambar added, and the Iranian regime could easily "stretch forth its hand" to target Azerbaijan's

strategic infrastructure. The "aggressive nature" of the Iranian regime must be kept in mind, he said. A nuclear-armed Iran is a threat to Azerbaijan and to the world, and must be prevented, but by peaceful methods.

¶4. (C) In a separate meeting with Tilleman, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Policy Planning Director Tofiq Musayev underscored Azerbaijan's necessarily cautious approach to the Iran protests. Musayev noted that Iran's adversarial posture toward Azerbaijan and its history of interference in Azerbaijan's affairs compel the GOAJ to tread carefully on the question of the rights of ethnic Azeri-Iranians. Musayev added that the USG should keep Azerbaijan and the USG's regional interests in mind as we seek to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The Azeri-Iranian protests have proven kind of a Rorschach test inside Azerbaijan. The Turkish DCM, while cooperative, seemed intent on downplaying their impact. Ambassador Morali is strongly opposed to the Iranian regime but when discussing Iran with Emboffs he has gone out of his way to state his objection to any "strategy for regime change" which involves relying on individual minority groups such as the Azeri-Iranians. Opposition parties urge the USG to support the Azeri-Iranians, but either pair this with requests for greater U.S. support for their own organizations or quickly shift the discussion to the easier topic of Azerbaijan's need for support against Iran. The approach of the GOAJ in the matter of the Azeri-Iranian demonstrations remains extreme interest tempered by extreme caution. END COMMENT.  
HYLAND